

I helped orchestrate Ms. O'Connell's confirmation today when I am also releasing a white paper from my role as lead Republican on the Senate HELP Committee about the role of the ASPR. We have learned from two responses under two different administrations—Ebola under Obama and COVID under Trump—that despite Congress's bipartisan intent that the ASPR be in charge in an emergency, that hasn't worked quite the way we envisioned. So I have a series of recommendations to bolster the role of the ASPR and bring greater clarity to our government's response for future emergencies. The ASPR needs to have strong, effective leadership and play a key role in coordinating the Federal Government response. The ASPR needs to have the authority and resources to strengthen public-private partnerships in our medical countermeasures, medical supply chain, and healthcare system. And the ASPR needs to leverage innovation to expand our preparedness infrastructure. Senator MURRAY, the chair of our HELP Committee, and I are working together on bipartisan legislation to address the response to the pandemic, and these recommendations will see their way into that legislation this fall.

MASK MANDATE

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, if you have flown in the past year, you have heard the announcement at the beginning of every flight that says Federal law requires that passengers wear a mask. Well, the last I checked, we have a constitutional system, and Congress makes laws. Something is not required by Federal law unless Congress passes such a law and the President signs it. That is the only way something becomes a federal law in this country.

We are coming through a pandemic, and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Over 150 million people in the United States are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Any American adult who wants to be vaccinated against COVID-19 can get vaccinated at this point, and the science should drive our decisions on how to open up. That is why today I introduced a resolution to encourage the CDC to review and update its guidance on wearing masks in confined spaces to clarify that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 no longer need to wear a mask on public transportation in the United States, including at airports, on commercial flights, and on buses and rail systems, and for the Transportation Security Administration to update its travel guidance to track with the latest science. I was joined in this effort by Senators COLLINS, LUMMIS, WICKER, MORAN and BLACKBURN, and I appreciate their support.

The CDC has been quite clear that masks are not needed for people who are fully vaccinated. Science matters, and vaccines work. The mandate to wear masks on planes and on other

modes of transportation—when they are no longer required in many businesses and restaurants for vaccinated people—is hurting the aviation industry.

If the objective is to encourage people to be vaccinated, one way to do that is for there to be a real difference in what you can do after being vaccinated. Repealing this requirement to wear masks on airplanes, at airports, and on public transportation would increase demand, increase travel, and would tie the policy to science. It is a commonsense step to take, and I hope more of my Senate colleagues will join us in encouraging the CDC to follow the science.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DAN HENDRIX

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dan Hendrix, who is retiring as president and chief executive officer of the World Trade Center Arkansas and associate vice chancellor of the Division of Economic Development at the University of Arkansas after a remarkable career dedicated to economic growth in the Natural State.

Dan is a proud Arkansan who has spent his life demonstrating his commitment to the State and developing opportunities to help businesses grow and flourish. He learned the tools that helped him succeed at the University of Arkansas and Arkansas State University, where he earned a bachelor of science in business administration with minors in marketing and management.

He started his career at ABF Freight System, where he established the subsidiary Container Carrier Corporation to transport ocean containers to and from major ports in the United States and throughout the world. Under his guidance, the company expanded import and export operations to U.S. ports of entry, and he served in several leadership positions within the company. He brought his skills to an Oklahoma Transportation Company in 1998.

In 2001, Dan joined the University of Arkansas and established the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations, where, among other successes, he led efforts to raise more than \$1 billion for the university as part of the institution's Campaign for the Twenty-First Century.

As president and CEO of World Trade Center Arkansas, Dan has used his talent and experience to help connect businesses in the State with international partners since its creation in 2007. His efforts have resulted in significantly increased exports of Arkansas goods and job growth. Today, businesses from all over Arkansas export products to nearly 200 countries and support 350,000 jobs in the State.

During Dan's tenure as leader of the World Trade Center Arkansas, he has also educated university students in global commerce through the center's

student intern program. The center has hosted dignitaries from more than 50 countries and enhanced diplomatic relations between the State of Arkansas and the United States with a variety of nations and economic partners.

I applaud Dan for his outstanding leadership and accomplished career. He has led a life of service and deserves our thanks for his military service and vision for expanding Arkansas's footprint around the globe. Dan is leaving a lasting legacy that will benefit future generations of Arkansans. I have been honored to work with him, and I appreciate his friendship. I know his wife Marilyn, children and grandchildren, who are very proud of him, are looking forward to spending more time together. I wish him the best on his retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO DAN SEWELL

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the career and service of a proud Ohioan, Dan Sewell, who will retire at the end of June, bringing an end to his 44-year career in journalism.

Dan spent 39 of those years with the Associated Press, serving Americans, both by bringing them the news and by telling their stories—in Buffalo, Miami, San Juan, Atlanta, and Chicago, where he has worked as a writer, editor, assistant bureau chief, and most recently in our home State, in Cincinnati, OH.

A native of Middletown, OH, Dan graduated from Edgewood High School. He got his start in journalism as a student journalist at Ohio University's student newspaper, The Post. That is where Dan and I first met, when he interviewed me as the youngest member of the Ohio State Legislature.

Journalists like Dan play a vital role in our democracy—they ask tough questions, they challenge special interests and uncover corruption, and they connect Americans with their communities and with the world. Whether it was the Grenada Invasion in 1983, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, or the mass shooting in Dayton's Oregon District in 2019, Dan has done vital work on the frontlines, covering stories that matter to people.

Not only has he made a difference through his writing, Dan also teaches as a part-time instructor of journalism at Miami University in Oxford, OH, helping mentor the next generation of journalists.

Dan is a devoted husband to Vickii, father of five, and grandfather of nine, and plans to spend time with them during retirement. And he will have more time to partake in his favorite hobby—attending Cincinnati Reds' games.

On behalf of grateful readers in Ohio and around the country, I thank Dan Sewell for nearly four decades of service in journalism, doing work that is important to the fabric of our communities and our country.●

TRIBUTE TO JEFF KIGHTLINGER

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the long career of public service provided to the people of Southern California by Jeffery Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, who is retiring after a 15-year tenure.

I would like to take a few moments to reflect on what an extraordinary leader Jeff has been not just for Southern California but for the whole State. Like Jeff, I care deeply about our water future. For years I have turned to him for his always wise counsel on how to solve the next challenge. Over these many years, I have come to view Jeff as a friend and to value our friendship. I have also learned to value equally his leadership abilities.

The treacherous politics of California water and the immense obstacles to getting anything done are legendary, but Jeff has always been up to the task. Jeff is not only one of the smartest people I know, but he has unparalleled ability to strategize how to approach a complex water negotiation. He has built deep and trusting relationships with many of the key players, not only in California but throughout the Colorado River Basin. Knowing the other parties as well as he does, Jeff is able to map out where there is the possibility of an agreement. He then is able to work steadily and patiently over months and years, gradually removing the obstacles until the parties can finally come together.

Many of Jeff's greatest accomplishments have come in guiding major changes within the Colorado River Basin, helping to collaboratively negotiate landmark pacts among a truce among 7 States, two countries, and 10 Native American tribes. These include the Quantification Settlement Agreement, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, significant revisions to the U.S.-Mexico water treaty, innovative storage programs in Lake Mead, and the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan. This has laid a solid foundation for longer term solutions to be negotiated over the next several years. Jeff has helped forge Metropolitan's partnerships with agricultural districts that have replaced litigation with cooperation.

If you evaluate a leader by the results they accomplish, what Jeff has achieved in preparing Southern California for drought is extraordinary. In a time when much of the California and the West is desperate for water, Southern California stands out for how well it is prepared. Millions of acre feet of water in storage ensures that the region can weather this drought even if it lasts for several more years.

It took a whole suite of actions for Jeff and Metropolitan to get to this place. Knowing that the climate is changing and droughts will worsen, Metropolitan has invested, planned, and prepared, resulting in record water storage, reduced water usage in the re-

gion, and unprecedented drought resiliency. This didn't happen by itself. Metropolitan's conservation programs, including \$350 million in turf removal incentives, transformed the Southern California landscape as Southern Californians embraced conservation as a way of life and permanently lowered water demands. Metropolitan has also launched the Regional Recycled Water Program Advanced Purification Center, a 500,000-gallon-per-day demonstration facility that could ultimately serve as one of the largest recycled water projects in the Nation.

Under Jeff's leadership, Metropolitan weathered the great recession and stabilized its finances while investing billions in restoring its aging conveyance system and improving its water treatment methods, setting a national example for how an agency can meet its infrastructure challenges. His record of environmental stewardship includes installing solar power at Metropolitan's water treatment plants and leading the organization's first efforts to address climate change. Through apprenticeships, recruitment, and promotions, Metropolitan was able to transfer the specialized knowledge of graying workforce to a new, diverse generation of water leaders.

No history of 21st century water in California and the West would be complete without acknowledging his contributions. Jeff has been an invaluable resource to myself, my staff, and those of numerous other Members with his expert analysis and advice that has informed our legislative work. His knowledge and counsel will be greatly missed. I ask our colleagues to join me in congratulating Jeff Kightlinger on his retirement and thanking him for his long career of public service to the people of Southern California.●

RECOGNIZING RUSTIC ROOTS ON SECOND

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I will recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize a woman-owned small business, Rustic Roots on Second of Pikeville, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Located in downtown Pikeville, Rustic Roots on Second opened its doors in 2015. After graduating from the University of Kentucky, founder and owner, Maura Minix, wanted to provide a place for Kentucky artisans to showcase and sell their work. Maura, who grew up in Prestonsburg, KY, saw an opportunity to set up a shop in neighboring Pikeville. She established Rustic Roots on Second, providing a retail outlet for Kentuckian and Appalachian artisans.

Today, Rustic Roots on Second continues supporting and promoting small businesses and artisans in eastern Kentucky. Over 30 local vendors sell their

goods at the store, ranging from food and textile goods to artwork and furniture made from used bourbon barrels. Maura's mother, Brenda Minix, is a key part of the operation, working as store manager and serving as the "face" of the business around town. Customers are regularly greeted by name and treated according to the golden rule. Rustic Roots on Second also serves as an event venue, renting out its shop for celebrations, fundraisers, and business events. The store works with local artisans to host classes and workshops, rotating offerings to meet community interest. From painting to dulcimer playing, teaching and celebrating the arts is a priority.

Notably, Rustic Roots on Second is a leader in downtown Pikeville's business community. They regularly participate in local and regional events, including the Appalachian Vintage Street Market, Wine-Tasting & Retailgating, and Pikeville's famous Hillbilly Days festival. Rustic Roots on Second is a member of the Southeast Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and is involved with Shaping Our Appalachian Region—SOAR—Kentucky, which fosters entrepreneurship and innovation in the region. They are committed to revitalizing and promoting downtown Pikeville through their support of the Pikeville Main Street Program, Inc.

Like many small businesses, Rustic Roots on Second actively supports charitable and civic organizations. For several years, Maura and Brenda have teamed up with local businesses to host picnics and decorate their storefronts to thank police officers, firefighters, and first responders for their service. They regularly support fundraisers for clubs, churches, and sports teams and have sponsored silent auctions to benefit local schools. Rustic Roots on Second's advocacy and community leadership has been recognized in local and regional publications.

When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, Pikeville rallied together to support Rustic Roots on Second. As a nonessential business, Rustic Roots on Second was impacted by the lockdowns. Maura and Brenda adapted, overhauling and expanding their online store to continue serving customers nationwide. As Kentucky reopened, Maura and Brenda worked with local small businesses to ensure downtown Pikeville reopened safely, welcoming locals and visitors alike to their vibrant community.

Rustic Roots on Second is an outstanding example of the critical role small businesses play in uplifting and advocating for their communities. Congratulations to Maura, Brenda, and the entire team at Rustic Roots on Second. I wish them the best of luck and look forward to watching their continued growth and success in Kentucky.●

TRIBUTE TO JASON SUSLAVICH

• Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I would like recognize an important